

STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD

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All Regional Water Board Chairpersons
All Regional Water Board Executive Officers
All LOP Agency Directors

DEC - 8 1995

LAWRENCE LIVERMORE NATIONAL LABORATORY (LLNL) REPORT ON LEAKING UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANK (UST) CLEANUP

In October 1995, the LLNL presented to the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) its final report, Recommendations to Improve the Cleanup Process for California's Leaking Underground Fuel Tanks. The LLNL team found that the impacts to the environment from leaking USTs were not as severe as we once thought. The report also presents a convincing argument that passive bioremediation should be considered as the primary remediation tool in most cases once the fuel leak source has been removed.

The LLNL report has also been presented to the SWRCB's SB 1764 Advisory Committee which will, in turn, provide recommendations to the SWRCB by the end of January 1996. The SWRCB may choose to implement recommendations from the LLNL report and the SB 1764 Advisory Committee through revisions to SWRCB Resolution 92-49 in early 1996.

In the interim and in light of the findings and recommendations in the LLNL report, we believe cleanup oversight agencies should proceed aggressively to close low risk soil only cases. For cases affecting low risk groundwater (for instance, shallow groundwater with maximum depth to water less than 50 feet and no drinking water wells screened in the shallow groundwater zone within 250 feet of the leak) we recommend that active remediation be replaced with monitoring to determine if the fuel leak plume is stable. Obviously good judgment is required in all of these decisions. However, that judgment should now include knowledge provided by the LLNL report.

What I propose to you is not in any way inconsistent with existing policies or regulations. However, it does represent a major departure from how we have viewed the threat from leaking USTs. This guidance is consistent with the results of a discussion of this subject among the State Board Chair and Regional Board Chairs on December 5, 1995. If you have any questions on this matter please call Mr. James Giannopoulos, our manager of the underground storage tank program, at (916) 227-4320.

Sincerely,

Walt Pettit
Executive Director

cc: All Regional Water Board/LOP UST Program Managers